1

Something's Wrong With Us

NATSUMI ANDO

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...I LIED TO...

THIS IS THE MAN...

AM I BEING PUNISHED?

CHAPTER 1
Reunited

MY MOTHER, WHO WORKED MAKING WAGASHI — TRADITIONAL JAPANESE SWEETS — BROUGHT ME ALONG TO THE SHOP WHERE SHE HAD FOUND A LIVE-IN POSITION.

I MET HIM IN THE SPRING...

I WAS FIVE. HE SAID HIS NAME WAS TSUBAKI.

HEY, IT SAYS, "SAKURA"!

大倉七桜

Name tag: "Nao Okura" (桜 is the character for "sakura," the Japanese cherry).

IT'S LIKE MINE!

HER NAME IS "NAO-CHAN."

TSUBAKI-SAN, THAT'S PRONOUNCED "O."

BUT SAKURA'S BETTER.

FOUNDED OVER 400 YEARS AGO, THE WAGASHI SHOP'S NAME...

...WAS **KO-GETSU-AN**, OR "SANCTUM OF THE SHINING MOON."

A SPRING NAME.

...HE WAS DAZZLING. ESPECIALLY TO A GIRL LIKE ME, WHO WAS SICKLY AND FRAIL AT THE TIME.

THEIR ONLY SON WAS SUNNY AND FRIENDLY...

Sign: Kogetsuan

I'M SORRY I WAS BUSY.

YOU MUST HAVE WANTED TO GO.

I SAW THEM WITH FATHER YESTERDAY. I TOOK THIS PHOTO SO I COULD SHOW YOU, SAKURA.

THE SAKURA WAS IN FULL BLOOM?

I DID WANT TO SEE THEM WITH TSUBAKI.

...WHY DO I ALWAYS DO THIS?

ANOTHER LIE...!

I DON'T WANT ANOTHER ASTHMA ATTACK.

NO, IT'S FINE.

...

MAKE SWEETS?

BACK THEN, EVERYTHING AROUND ME LOOKED DRAB AND GRAY.

SLOWLY.

THAT'S IT.

CAREFUL, NOW.

WE CAN STAY INDOORS.

YEAH! LET'S MAKE SOME TOGETHER, SAKURA.

BUT...

I'LL TEACH YOU.

PINK...

...LIKE SAKURA BLOSSOMS...

SUCH A PRETTY PINK, TOO.

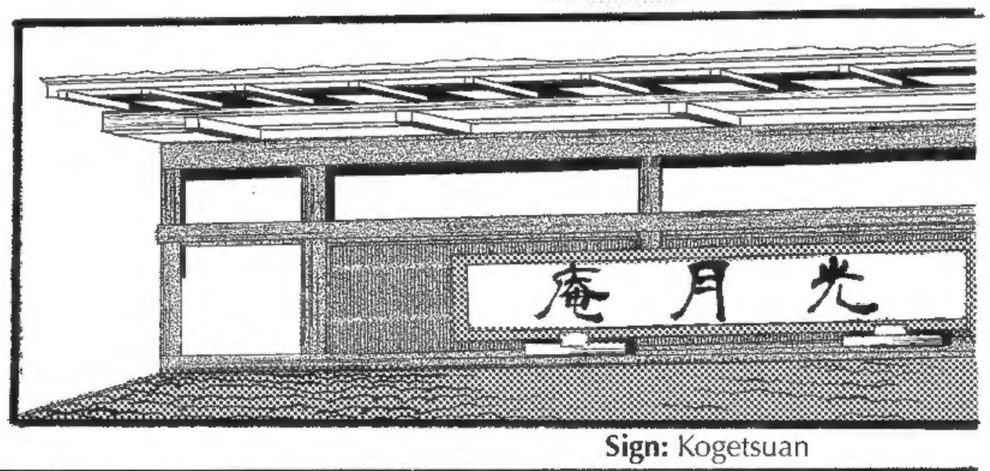
YOU DID IT! SAKURA BLOSSOM *WAGASHI!*

SAKURA BLOSSOMS...

THAT WAS WHEN...

NAO ?!

...MY WORLD FOUND COLOR.



Sign: Kogetsuan

N...

JUST LOOK!

WOW!

TSUBAKI-SAN?

...NAO, YOU CAN'T DO THIS HERE!

NONE OF THEM ARE THE SAME.

THEY'RE ALL DIFFERENT SHAPES.

THEN CAN I MAKE SWEETS HERE WHEN I GROW UP?

REALLY?

YEAH.

SURE! WHEN I OWN THE SHOP, YOU'LL BE THE HEAD CONFEC-TIONER.

THAT'S AMAZING.

YOU COULD MAKE ***ANYTHING***, SAKURA.

TH... THEN,

YOU AND ME...

TSUBAKI.

FATHER?

HOW MANY TIMES MUST I TELL YOU NOT TO ENTER THE STAFF QUARTERS?

YOU'RE HEIR TO THE SHINING MOON OF KOGETSU-AN.

ACT ACCORD-INGLY.

HEY, MOMMA?

Sign: Kogetsuan

I...

...CAN'T STAY HERE AND MAKE SWEETS WITH TSUBAKI FOREVER, CAN I?

YOU'RE A LIVE-IN WORKER,

BUT WE CAN'T STAY HERE FOREVER, RIGHT?

HOLD OUT YOUR HAND!

I'VE GOT SOMETHING FOR YOU!

NAO!

THEN YOU'LL *ALWAYS* BE WITH ME AND TSUBAKI-KUN!

YOU CAN MAKE SWEETS *ANYWHERE!*

SO FOR AS LONG AS YOU WANT TO, I HOPE YOU'LL KEEP AT IT.

"ALWAYS."

TSUBAKI MEANS CAMELLIA, RIGHT?

WHY DON'T WE GIVE HIM THIS CAMELLIA-LEAF-SHAPED CUTTER?

THINKING BACK, THAT YEAR...

WOW.

THANKS, SAKURA!

...WAS THE HAPPIEST TIME OF MY LIFE.

MOMMA...

...IS GONE ALREADY ...?

RUMBLE ゴゴゴ

RUMBLE ゴゴゴ

光月庵

Sign: Kogetsuan

BUT...

MY MEMORY OF THAT MORNING IS HAZY IN SOME PLACES...

...THOSE CAMELLIA FLOWERS BLOOMING ALL OVER THE GARDEN...

RUMBLE ゴゴゴ

RUMBLE ゴゴゴ

...AND WHAT I SAW THERE...

...ARE FOREVER SEARED INTO MY SOUL!!

LOKI FLASH

DID YOU REALLY SEE SOMEONE COME OUT OF YOUR FATHER'S ROOM?!

ARE YOU SURE, TSUBAKI-SAN?!

THE MASTER!

WHO?! WHO WAS IT?!

HOW COULD THIS HAPPEN?!

WHY?

SAKURA'S MOM.

WHY?

CAN WE HAVE A WORD WITH YOU?

MOMMA!

MOMMA!

THAT WAS THE DAY...

...I WAS FORCED TO LEAVE KOGETSU-AN...

15 years later

Komatsu City

The Sayama Household

The Sayama Way of Tea

...“INTER-ESTING”?

I HAVE AN INTERESTING SWEET FOR YOU TODAY.

IT’S BY A *WAGASHI* CONFECTIONER I LIKE WHO WORKS AT IKKODO.

UM...

THE TEA WAS LOVELY.

RIGHT, NAO-SAN?

ME?

I ASKED TO HAVE IT CAPTURE YOUR ESSENCE, SATOMI-SAN.

SHE'S GOING TO MAKE IT RIGHT HERE.

YES, MAYU-SAN.

LEAVE IT TO ME.

幸堂

Nao Hanaoka (21)

A BIRD?

IT'S ADOR-ABLE.

SINCE YOU HAVE SUCH A LOVELY VOICE THAT CARRIES SO WELL,

THAT'S WHAT CAME TO MIND.

ITS BEAUTIFUL SONG IS LIKENED TO A "GOLDEN SOPRANO."

A SPRING BIRD, THE WARBLING WHITE-EYE.

SHE'S EVEN COMPETING SOON.

SATOMI-SAN REALLY DOES SING!

WOW, NAO-SAN.

Uniform: Ikkodo

IT'S DELICIOUS.

EAT IT WITH THE BEAK FACING IN THE DIRECTION FOR GOOD LUCK.*

THEN HERE.

*Mimicking the character 吉 for "good fortune."

A SPECIAL SWEET, MADE JUST FOR ME...

CAN YOU DO THIS FOR ANY CUSTOMER?

YES.

...AND A FEELING FOR THE PERSON.

AS LONG AS I HAVE BEAN PASTE...

THAT'S...

一幸堂

...THE NAO HANAOKA WAY OF *WAGASHI.*

I'M SURE NOW.

YOU'RE THE ONE I WANT, NAO-SAN.

YOU MEAN FOR YOUR UPCOMING CEREMONY?

YES.

IT'S A ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME EVENT, SO IT BETTER BE SOMETHING I LIKE, RIGHT?

THAT'S WHY I WANT TO ASK ***YOU,*** NAO-SAN.

WEDDING FAVOR SWEETS?

PLEASE!

PLEASE LET ME DO IT!

SWEETS FOR A WEDDING!!

WE'RE PLANNING TO TASTE-TEST BOTH AT AN UPCOMING TEA CEREMONY ATTENDED BY BOTH FAMILIES, AND DECIDE THEN.

I SUPPOSE THAT SOUNDS A BIT LIKE A COMPETITION...

THERE'S A PROBLEM, THOUGH...

MY FIANCÉ'S THE HEIR TO HIS SCHOOL AS WELL, AND THEY HAVE A GO-TO PLACE IN MIND...

IT'S IN KANAZAWA.

YOU KNOW, THE FAMOUS ONE...

IS THE OTHER *WAGASHI* PLACE IN KOMATSU CITY, TOO?

OH, NO, NO.

THEN I'VE GOT A CHANCE, RIGHT?

I'D LOVE TO!

AND IT'LL GET LOTS OF PEOPLE TO TRY MY SWEETS!

BI-

PUMP

KO-
GETSU-
AN...

KOGETSUAN.

HANAOKA.

I HEARD YOU TURNED DOWN THE SAYAMA TEA CEREMONY OFFER?

NAO-SAN?

I'M SORRY, MAYU-SAN...

THAT'S TOO BAD.

Sign: Ikkodo

AS AN ARTISAN, IT'S CAREER-ENDING...

AND YOU CAN'T USE *THIS.*

DRIP ポタ

DRIP ポタ

GASP はっ

I GUESS YOU HAD TO.

BUT ...

THE THEME WAS SAKURA BLOSSOMS, RIGHT?

SENPAI!

I THINK USING IT TO MAKE *HANAIKADA** COULD TRANSPORT ME TO A FANTASY WORLD! CAN I USE IT?

THIS CUTTER'S TOTALLY ADORABLE.

UH, SURE...

*A confection shaped like a flower raft.

...THAT YOU'RE SCARED OF THE COLOR RED.

I TRIED TO GIVE UP SO MANY TIMES...

...TO STOP MAKING SWEETS...

...OVER AND OVER...

15 YEARS LATER...

...CAN'T FORGET THAT MOMENT.

...I STILL...

WHEN I'M MAKING WAGASHI IS THE ONLY TIME...

...I FEEL LIKE I'M NOT ALONE.

...I COULDN'T GIVE IT UP.

BUT...

IT'S THE ONE THING I HAVE LEFT...

...TO LIVE FOR.

EVEN IF I LOSE EVERYTHING ELSE...

...AS LONG AS I HAVE THIS—

HANAOKA-SAN, CAN I ASK YOU SOMETHING IF YOU HAVE A MOMENT?

WE HAVE TO TALK.

OF COURSE.

ABOUT WHAT?

Uniform: Ikkodo

I'M SORRY...

...BUT I HAVE TO TERMINATE YOUR EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT...

...AT THE END OF NEXT MONTH.

WHAT...?

PLEASE!

THERE AREN'T ANY LIVE-IN POSITIONS ANYWHERE ELSE!

THERE'S SO MUCH MORE I WANT TO LEARN HERE!

I WANT TO MAKE MORE *WAGASHI!*

HOW FIRM *MANJU* DOUGH SHOULD BE, HOW TO GRILL UP *KINTSUBA*...

LIKE HOW TO BOIL BEANS FOR THE BEST TASTE,

W...WAIT, WHY?

IF THERE'S A PROBLEM, I'LL FIX IT!

WHY?

...AND WHEN WE GET THIS KIND OF THING DAY AFTER DAY...

BUT WE CAN'T TOLERATE THIS, EITHER.

WE SERVE CUSTOMERS, AFTER ALL...

...IN THIS DAY AND AGE...

WHAT ...?

From: xxxx@xxxx
To: xxxxx@xxxx

Nao Hanaoka's mother is a murderer

#11 VSSHHHHH

WHO DID THIS?

WHO?

VROOOM

IS SOMEONE SPYING ON ME?

...!

OW...

VROOM

ZOOOOM

N-
NO...!

whew...

I HOPE YOU'LL ALWAYS KEEP AT IT.

From: [illegible]
To: xxxxx@xxxx

Nao Hanaoka's mother is a murderer

LOOK AT YOU, YOU'RE SOAKED.

WHO...?

HERE...

ONCE YOU TURNED 20, I WAS ASKED TO GIVE THIS TO YOU...

SO WE FINALLY MEET, NAO HANAOKA-SAN.

I HAD A TOUGH TIME FINDING YOU BECAUSE YOU CHANGED YOUR LAST NAME.

...BY YOUR MOTHER.

To Nao

JUST...

...A FAN OF YOUR MOTHER'S SWEETS.

WHO ARE YOU?

WHO ...

UM...!

BUT...

...MOMMA'S ALREADY...

Jo Nao

FROM MOMMA?

Jo Nao !!

SHRRP

HUFF

HUFF

HUFF

MAYU-
SAN.

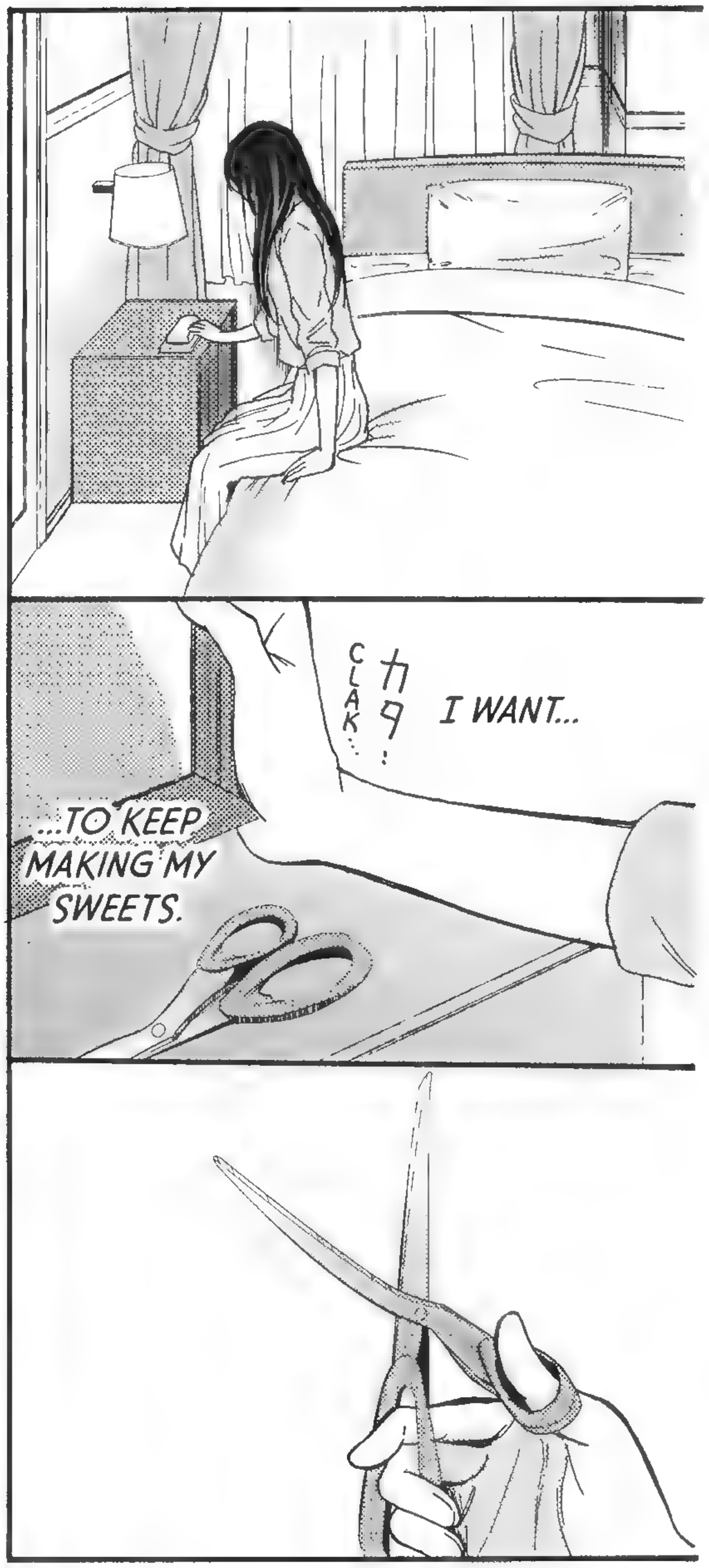
SORRY
FOR THE
SUDDEN
CALL.

...I'D LIKE TO TAKE ON THE TEA CEREMONY JOB.

IF IT'S NOT TOO LATE...

...LET ANYONE STOP ME...

I WON'T...



Uniform: Kogetsu

Kana-
zawa

The
Umeda
House-
hold

CAN YOU WAIT IN THE GUEST ROOM UNTIL WE'RE READY?

THE PERSON FROM KOGETSUAN IS ALREADY THERE.

TWITCH
ピク

...YOU AGREED TO THIS, NAO-SAN.

I'M SO GLAD...

IT'S OKAY.

THEY WON'T RECOGNIZE ME.

CLATTER カﾗﾝ

NAO-SAN,

LET ME INTRO-DUCE YOU.

IT'S THROUGH HERE.

THIS IS TSUBAKI TAKATSUKI-SAN FROM KOGETSUAN.

WHOOSH

DID SHE JUST...

ALL RIGHT, NAO-SAN. SEE YOU IN A BIT.

YOU THERE.

CLOSE THE DOOR. THE SWEETS WILL DRY OUT.

...SAY "TSUBAKI"...?

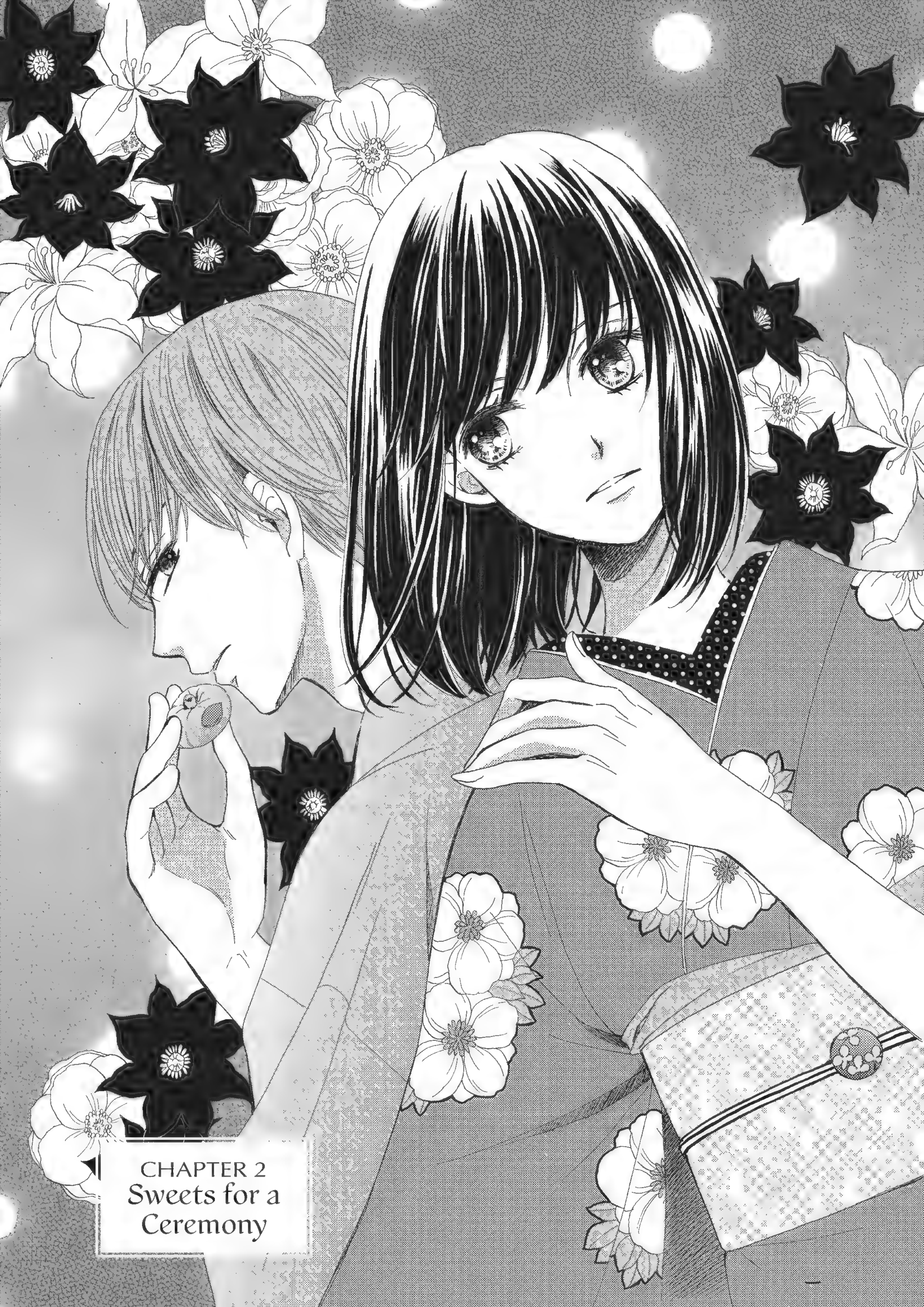
...BUT...

...THIS MAN...

AT THIS POINT... I COULDN'T HAVE KNOWN...

TSUBAKI.

...WAS ABOUT TO THROW MY LIFE INTO CHAOS YET AGAIN...



CHAPTER 2
Sweets for a Ceremony

TSUBAKI.

TSUBAKI.

ARE YOU THE CONFECTIONER COMPETING AGAINST ME TODAY?

WHSH

...

SST

...!

FLINCH

...

HUH...

HIS HEIGHT...

HIS VOICE...

HE'S NOTHING LIKE THE TSUBAKI I KNEW...

HIS HANDS...

SO BIG AND BONY...

WHAT ABOUT ME?

THE KITCHEN IS PREPPED FOR YOUR USE.

PLEASE EXCUSE ME.

DOES HE RECOG-NIZE ME?

OR NOT?

THWAP

カリ
キャ
CLACK

カリ
キャ
CLACK

カリ
キャ
CLACK

WHICH IS IT?

AMATEUR.

CUT OUT THAT UNNECESSARY NOISE.

FWOO

HAAH

CLATTER

CALM DOWN...

CALM DOWN.

CALM DOWN.

YOU'RE THE ONE I WANT, NAO-SAN.

I CAN'T TURN MY BACK ON THIS.

CLATTER

ガラ

OF COURSE.

RIGHT...

THE SWEETS TODAY ARE FOR A CELEBRATION.

SAKURA BLOSSOMS...

SAKURA BLOSSOMS...

SAKURA BLOSSOMS...

THANK YOU FOR WAITING.

TAKATSUKI FROM KOGETSUAN, AT YOUR SERVICE.

UH.

I-I'M HANAOKA.

H-HI THERE.

WITH ALL DUE RESPECT...

WHICH SHALL WE TASTE FIRST?

I'VE NEVER HEARD OF HER.

"HANA-OKA"?

THEN LET US START WITH KOGETSUAN'S.

BUT OF COURSE.

THANK YOU.

BEING ASKED TO GO SECOND IS A SLIGHT I WOULD HAVE A HARD TIME REPORTING BACK.

KOGETSUAN HAS ENJOYED PATRONAGE FROM THE UMEDA HOUSEHOLD FOR MANY YEARS.

SWEETS FROM THE SHINING MOON. HOW EXCITING.

I WISH WE HAD SOMEONE WITH MORE EXPERIENCE.

BUT THE CONFEC-TIONER'S SO YOUNG.

スト…!

THESE COLORS ARE SUPERB.

ALL THREE HAVE SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT SHADES.

WHAT DELICATE SWEETS.

OH... MY...

MURMUR

I CALL THESE "USUZUMI-ZAKURA."

THE USUZUMI-ZAKURA IS A SPECIAL SAKURA TREE.

ITS FLOWERS ARE LIGHT PINK AS IT BUDS,

THEN BLOOM WHITE...

...AND FINALLY TURN A PALE, INK-LIKE GRAY BEFORE FALLING.

A WEDDING IS A ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME CELEBRATION.

NOT JUST ANY SAKURA BLOSSOMS WILL DO.

THEY MUST BE SINGULAR AND EXTRAORDINARILY MAGNIFICENT.

NO NEED TO COMMENT ON THEIR BEAUTY.

THEY WOULDN'T BE *WAGASHI* OTHERWISE.

THESE...

...ARE TSUBAKI'S WAGASHI...

IT'S NOT JUST THE COLOR.

THEY'RE PERFECTLY PROPORTIONED. THE DIFFICULT PRESSED PATTERN IS DONE BEAUTIFULLY.

EACH LINE LOOKS AS IF IT'S ALIVE.

I CAN'T BELIEVE HE MANAGED SUCH DELICATE COLORS.

THEY'RE REMARK-ABLE.

AGE HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH MAKING CONFECTIONS.

URK うっ

SHALL WE HAVE YOURS, NOW?

HANAOKA-SAN.

GASP

HERE THEY ARE...

OH, OF COURSE.

YES.

H-HANAOKA-SAN, THE THEME WAS SAKURA BLOSSOMS.

BUT...

THIS COLOR...

THEY'LL UNDER-STAND.

DON'T WORRY.

WHAT...?

MY CON-
FECTION IS
GREEN.

I CALL IT
"HAZAKURA."*

*Hazakura = the new leaves as the petals fall.

SAKURA
BLOSSOMS
LOOK
THE MOST
SPLENDID...

...WHEN THEY
BLOOM AND
EVERYTHING IS
DYED PINK.

IT'S
TRUE...

DAY BY DAY, THE GREENERY TURNS MORE LUSH...

...THE PRETTY PETALS FALL,

AND, AS IF WAITING FOR THAT MOMENT, THE LEAVES COME IN.

BUT SOON, THE SPRING GALES RAGE...

...EVENTUALLY GIVING WAY TO A SEASON OF NEW LEAVES.

AND SO, I HOPE...

...AS THE SEASONS PASS...

...THAT YOU WILL ALWAYS BE JOINED IN HARMONY.

MAY YOUR DAYS BE FOREVER FILLED WITH JOY.

I COULDN'T BE HAPPIER FOR YOU, MAYU-SAN.

OH.

NAO-SAN...

SO SHE MEANS TO TELL US... TRUE HAPPINESS LIES IN EVERYDAY LIFE?

THE BEAN PASTE HAS SAKURA BLOSSOM LEAVES INSIDE.

Just a hint.

YOU'RE RIGHT. IT'S GOOD.

I SEE.

WHAT AN ORIGINAL CONCEPT.

MAYBE WE SHOULD HIRE HER FOR OUR TEA CEREMONIES ONE OF THESE DAYS.

HANAOKA-SAN,

WOULD YOU CARE TO JOIN THE DINNER AFTER THIS?

HUH?!

NO, UH... I COULDN'T POSSIBLY! I SHOULD GO.

ALL RIGHT. THEN WE'LL LET YOU KNOW THE RESULT SHORTLY.

IF THEY USE MY SWEETS AS WEDDING FAVORS...

...I'M SURE I CAN STAY IN THIS BUSINESS.

Nao

THE WAGASHI BUSINESS, JUST LIKE MOMMA.

I SHOULD SAY BYE TO MAYU-SAN...

KOGETSUAN WILL OF COURSE MAKE THE WEDDING FAVORS.

AH.

MA—

IF WE TURN KOGETSUAN DOWN,

WE'LL BE OSTRACIZED.

YOU'RE THE DAUGHTER OF A SCHOOL OF TEA, TOO, MAYU-SAN. YOU MUST UNDERSTAND.

...YOU JUST CAN'T GO AGAINST THE SHINING MOON.

IN OUR WORLD...

WH—

I SEE.

SO I NEVER EVEN HAD A CHANCE.

RUSTLE

SCRUNCH

GRAB

"I HEAD HOME..."

"...UNDER GREEN SAKURA TREES, AND SEASON FISH WITH SALT."

Written by Ayako Hosomi (1931

SAY.

DO YOU...

WANT TO MARRY ME?

FWISH...
To Nao

I'M JOKING.

FORGET IT.

To Nao

SURE.

I THOUGHT
I NEVER WANTED
TO SEE HIM
AGAIN.

To Nao

If it wasn't me.

SOMETHING'S WRONG WITH ME.

LET'S DO IT.

LET'S GET MARRIED.

CHAPTER 3
Marriage

ARE YOU SERIOUS?

ARE *YOU*?

WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

...

HEY, IT SAYS, "SAKURA"!

...

NAO.

SAKURA.

SAKURA.

NAO...

...HANAOKA.

IF YOU'RE SERIOUS ABOUT GETTING MARRIED...

...COME TO KOGETSUAN...

THREE DAYS FROM NOW, ON THE 26TH AT NOON.

IT'S UP TO YOU WHETHER TO COME OR NOT.

BUT IF YOU DO...

OKAY THEN, *NAO.*

OH...

...AND DON'T FORGET TO BRING A GIFT.

THERE'S NO GOING BACK.

...DOESN'T REMEMBER ME.

TSUBAKI...

BUT I REMEMBER.

Naoki me.

I'VE BEEN ALONE EVER SINCE THAT DAY...

TSUBAKI'S WORDS...

...STOLE MY HAPPINESS AWAY.

HOW MANY SLEEPLESS NIGHTS I HAD...

REMEMBER HOW PAINFUL THESE PAST 15 YEARS WERE...

I LOATHE TSUBAKI.

SOME-THING'S WRONG WITH ME.

Dear Nao,

I CAN'T POSSIBLY MARRY SOMEONE LIKE THAT.

NAO-SAN.

I CAN STILL...

MAYU-SAN,

I HAVE A FAVOR TO ASK OF YOU.

OH GOOD, YOU'RE STILL HERE!

I'M SORRY. I'M THE ONE WHO ASKED YOU...

BUT...

U-UM, ABOUT THE WEDDING FAVORS.

I CAN STILL TAKE IT BACK.

SWEETS FROM KOGETSUAN!

Bag: Kogetsu

カルラ IN WINTER

I GOT EXACTLY WHAT YOU ASKED FOR.

MAYU-SAN,

I'M SORRY FOR THE HASSLE.

A HANA-IKADA...

A NATANE...

...AND THEIR SPECIALTY, *MONAKA*.

THANK YOU.

Sweets: Kogetsu

...KO-GETSU-AN?

DON'T THEY TASTE DIFFERENT THAN THEY USED TO?

...

THE FIRST TIME I HAD SOME, THAT WAS THE ONLY PLACE I'D GET SWEETS FROM FOR TWO YEARS STRAIGHT.

THEY WERE JUST TOO GOOD.

THOUGH THAT'S 15 YEARS AGO ALREADY.

THAT'S WHEN MOMMA WAS MAKING THE SWEETS...

15 YEARS...

N... NAO-SAN?!

ギュッ I SQUEEZE

HUH?!

"JUST TOO GOOD."

MOMMA...

I'M SORRY.

I'M JUST SO HAPPY.

MOMMA...

MOMMA...

Uniform: Kogetsu

HOW MUCH DISTRESS DID YOU FEEL...?

HOW MUCH DESPAIR...

Dear Nao,

It wasn't me.

WHEN YOUR DREAM AND LIFE'S PURPOSE WAS SNATCHED AWAY IN AN INSTANT?

THAT'S MOMMA'S CRY FOR HELP.

MOMMA...

MOMMA...

LET ME SEE HER!

NO!

MOMMA!!

たいようの家

YOU CAN'T SEE YOUR MOTHER.

YOU LIVE HERE NOW, NAO-CHAN.

Sign: Sunshine Orphanage

BUT...

YOU CONFESSED YESTERDAY!

AND WE HAVE A WITNESS!

I DON'T KNOW ANY-THING.

WHY DID YOU MURDER HIM?

...MAKING SWEETS...

I...

I REALLY DON'T KNOW...

...WAS JUST...

...ANY-THING ...

庵月光

...AT THAT PLACE...

光月

Sign: Kogetsuan
Curtains: Kogetsu

SHE COLLAPSED WHILE ON TRIAL AND PASSED AWAY...

AND WITH SUCH A KIND-LOOKING FACE, TOO. TERRIFYING.

NO ONE KNOWS WHY SHE DID IT, RIGHT?

ABOUT WHAT REALLY HAPPENED...

SHE WANTS ME TO FIND OUT THE TRUTH.

MONAKA

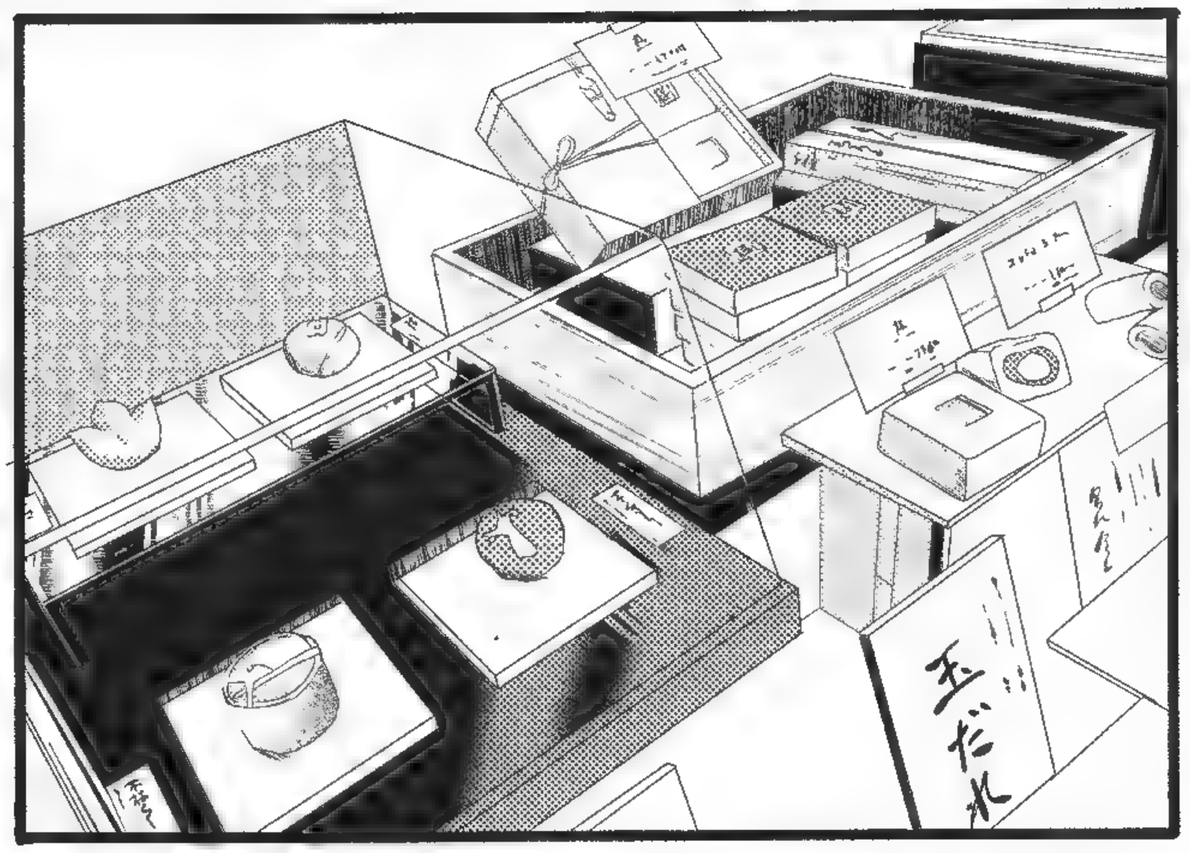
DORAYAKI

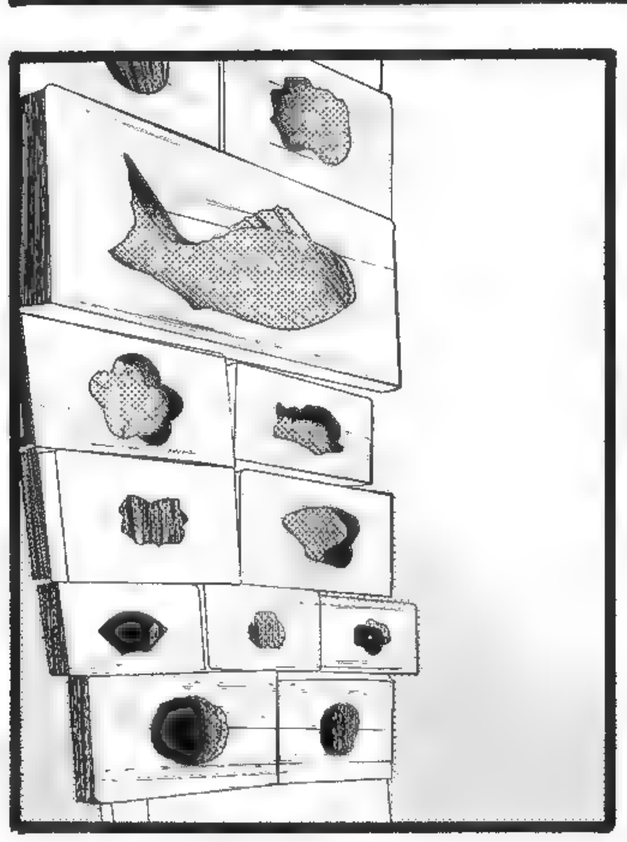
"THERE'S NO GOING BACK."

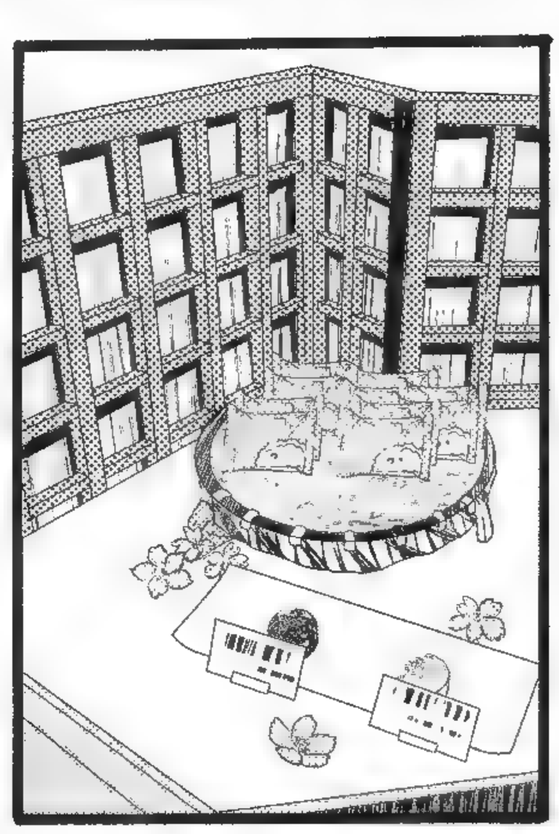
Curtains: Kogetsu

CLATTER

桜
玉だれ


玉だれ





HELLO.

WOULD YOU CARE FOR SOME TEA?

IS TSUBAKI-SAN HERE?

GRIP...

I DIDN'T REALIZE YOU WERE TSUBAKI-SAN'S GUEST.

MY APOLOGIES.

THIS WAY, PLEASE.

TSUBAKI-SAN ASKED ME TO COME.

MY NAME IS NAO HANAOKA.

THE HALLWAY LEADING TO THE MAIN HOUSE...

I REMEMBER THE FEEL OF THIS PLACE.

IT FEELS SACRED...

...LIKE I'VE ENTERED SOME DIVINE REALM.

I'M REALLY BACK.

...THAT GARDEN...

THROUGH THE KITCHEN...

THE STORE-HOUSE IS ON THE LEFT...

...THE HANGING SCROLL ON THE RIGHT...

TURN LEFT AT THE END, AND THERE'S...

MISS.

I HAVE TO SEE TSUBAKI FIRST...

THAT'S RIGHT.

IN HERE.

GO AHEAD.

THE WEDDING CEREMONY HAS JUST STARTED.

WHOSE—

"WED-DING"?

"WANNA MARRY ME?"

THIS IS WONDERFUL FOR KOGETSUAN.

"COME TO KOGETSUAN...

THREE DAYS FROM NOW, ON THE 26TH AT NOON."

WHAT IS THIS?

I'M SURE THIS WILL EXPAND THE BUSINESS EVEN MORE.

SHE'S THE DAUGHTER OF HASEYA, RIGHT? THAT'S ONE OF JAPAN'S MOST PRESTIGIOUS INNS.

WHAT IS HE THINKING?

FWISH

HUH?

MURMUR

WHO'S THAT?

WHA—

YOU! WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF A WEDDING!!

...!

NO WAY I'M BACKING DOWN NOW.

WILL YOU...

...ACCEPT MY GIFT?

SO.

WHAT'S THIS GIFT?

SHE'S MY GUEST.

THIS.

MY GIFT IS *YOKAN.*

AND SHE BROUGHT BLACK SWEET BEAN JELLY?!

A GIFT FOR A WEDDING,

YOKAN?!

"NEW MOON."

WHAT IS IT CALLED?

I SEE THERE'S NOTHING INSIDE.

...CELEBRATES THAT GOLDEN ORB, SHINING IN THE DARK-NESS.

OFTEN, ...A CHEST-NUT IN *YOKAN*...

A MOONLIT NIGHT...

...PARTIC-ULARLY WITH A FULL MOON, IS BEAUTIFUL.

BUT...

...AND THE NIGHT REVEALS ITS TRUE, LUSH NATURE.

THE FLOWERS' SCENT GROWS STRONGER...

THE STARS TWINKLE WITH MORE SPLENDOR...

...WITH-OUT THE MOON...

"NEW MOON,"
A CLEAR, MOONLESS NIGHT...

I HOPE YOU SAVOR IT.

THAT'S MY AIM.

I WANTED YOU TO TASTE THE TRUE FLAVOR OF THE *YOKAN* ITSELF.

THIS SHOP...

...IS NOTHING SPECIAL.

EVEN WITHOUT THE MOON...

EVEN WITHOUT KOGETSUAN ...

...THE WORLD OF WAGASHI *IS* BEAUTIFUL.

YOU...

GET HER OUT OF HERE, NOW!

MURMUR

WHAT AN INSULT!

MURMUR

MURMUR

MURMUR

YOU REALLY ARE SOMETHING.

I'M...

...GOING TO MARRY *HER.*

HEY...!

I SHOULD HATE HIM...

WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME?

...MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE IN THE WORLD.

...THERE'S NO GOING BACK NOW...

BUT...

CHAPTER 4
Kogetsuan

PLIP ポッ

PLIP ポッ

MARRY...

...HER...?

Sign: Kogetsuan

FATHER.

HASEYA-SAN.

HOW MUCH DO YOU THINK WE DOLED OUT AT THE BETROTHAL?!

DO YOU MEAN TO HUMILIATE MY DAUGHTER?!

YOU CAN'T DO THAT!

LET ME GO!

IT'S NOT LIKE YOU TO MAKE SUCH A FUSS.

THE HASEYA INN STANDS FOR REFINEMENT AND TRUST, DOES IT NOT?

ザワ MURMUR

ザワ MURMUR

はっ GASP

PLEASE...

...WON'T YOU LEAVE THIS TO ME, AS TSUBAKI'S MOTHER?

KOGETSUAN'S PROPRIETRESS...

I APPRE-
CIATE IT.

I...IF
YOU SAY SO,
KYOKO-SAN...

KOGETSUAN'S
PROPRIETRESS...

I FEEL LIKE
I HARDLY EVER
SAW HER WHEN
I WAS A KID.

SHE WAS
ALWAYS
BEHIND THE
MASTER...

...AND I
DON'T REALLY
REMEMBER
HER FACE.

ｶﾁｬ

TSUBAKI-
SAN.

ARE YOU
SERIOUS
ABOUT WHAT
YOU SAID?

I AM.

ズバッ

TSUBAKI.

TSU-BAKI, ARE YOU HERE?

TSUBAKI-SAN IS AT HIS LESSONS RIGHT NOW.

ENOUGH OF YOUR SELFISHNESS!

WHAT AN EMBAR-RASSMENT!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

THIS IS THE MAIN HOUSE.

THE HELP SHOULD STAY OUT.

I REMEMBER...

...THESE COLD EYES...

DON'T YOU WANT TO ESTABLISH YOURSELF?

PICK THE PROPER PERSON!

ESPECIALLY SINCE WE'LL LOSE HASEYA-SAN'S BACKING, RIGHT?

THIS IS IMPORTANT FOR KO-GETSUAN!

ISN'T THAT WHY I'M GETTING MARRIED?

OUT OF MY WAY!

JUST GET BACK TO THE WEDDING...

...IF YOU DON'T WANT TO BE THROWN OUT.

...

IT'S LIKE SHE DOESN'T EVEN SEE ME.

THUD

ABOUT 15 YEARS AGO...

...WHEN THE MASTER DIED IN THIS SHOP?

DOES HASEYA-SAN'S DAUGHTER KNOW?

...EX...

EXCUSE ME...?

BECAUSE I KNOW ALL ABOUT IT...

AND I WANT TO BE WITH TSUBAKI-SAN ALL THE SAME.

PUBLICLY, THEY SAY HE DIED OF AN ILLNESS, BUT THE TRUTH IS UNCLEAR.

COULD YOU KEEP IT DOWN IN THERE?

WHO ARE YOU?

WHAT—

WHAT ARE YOU AFTER?!

F-FATHER...

HE'S THE FATHER-IN-LAW...

YOU'LL SCARE THE CATS AWAY.

I'M FEELING GOOD TODAY.

SO GOOD THAT I MADE SOME *RAKUGAN.*

IT'S NOT GOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH.

NO, YOU MUSTN'T BE UP.

YOU WANT ONE, TOO?

THEN...

...THIS IS KOGETSUAN'S...

SHP

OOPS.

OH DEAR, I DROPPED IT.

THERE, THERE, LITTLE ONE.

I'VE TOLD OUR GUESTS THAT THE OWNER ISN'T FEELING WELL.

PLEASE DON'T LET THIS DISTURB YOUR REST.

I GUESS I SHOULD SAY A WORD TO OUR GUESTS.

FATHER!

BUT THEY'RE IMPORTANT GUESTS, NO?

STILL...

IS EVERYONE HERE?

HE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED! WHO KNOWS WHAT HE MIGHT SAY...?!

STOP HIM, TSUBAKI-SAN!

LATER

MURMUR

IT'S THE OLD MASTER.

YOU'RE RIGHT. HOW RARE.

I THOUGHT HE WAS UNWELL.

FATHER!

...BUT THE WEDDING TODAY IS CANCELED.

I AM TRULY SORRY...

I, SOJURO TAKATSUKI, WILL SPEND THE REST OF MY LIFE...

ATONING FOR THIS DISCOUR-TESY.

WHA...

MY SINCEREST APOLOGIES.

YOU MUST BE FURIOUS, OF COURSE.

...

THIS IS ALL OUT OF MY SELFISHNESS.

I'M SO VERY SORRY.

I TAKE FULL RESPONSIBILITY.

TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH,

KOGETSUAN HAS NOT BEEN DOING TOO WELL THESE PAST FEW YEARS.

THAT'S WHY HASEYA-SAMA OFFERED TO HELP US FINANCIALLY.

WHAT WE NEED IS TO CHANGE KOGETSUAN.

I BELIEVE IT'S POINTLESS TO RELY ON A TEMPORARY FINANCIAL BOOST.

BUT "THE HEIGHT OF A MOUNTAIN ALONE DOES NOT INDICATE ITS WORTH."

YOUR GRAND-FATHER HAS ALWAYS KEPT THIS SHOP GOING.

WHERE DID YOU GET SUCH AN IDEA?

TAKE IT BACK!

TSUBAKI-SAN!!

IS THAT TRUE...?

WHAT ...?

IN EVERY WAY, I WILL TURN US INTO THE IDEAL *WAGASHI* SHOP...

TASTE, QUALITY...

...AND IS ACKNOWL-EDGED BY ALL...

...THAT SATISFIES ITS CUSTOMERS...

I...

...GIVE YOU MY WORD.

AND HERE I THOUGHT YOU WERE STILL A BOY.

HOW YOU'VE GROWN.

I WILL HOLD YOU TO YOUR WORD.

PRODUCE RESULTS IN THREE MONTHS, OR LEAVE HERE FOR GOOD WITH THAT WOMAN.

SUCH BOLD WORDS...

...WHEN YOU STILL KNOW NOTHING.

庵月光

Sign: Kogetsuan

...WHAT HAPPENED 15 YEARS AGO?

HOW DO YOU KNOW ABOUT...

YOU HAVE A CUT BY YOUR MOUTH.

...

I WANTED TO KNOW WHAT I WAS MARRYING INTO.

...THAT KOGETSUAN'S MASTER WAS MURDERED.

THERE WERE RUMORS ONLINE...

THE *WAGASHI* LOOK BEAUTIFUL ...

...BUT THEY'RE NOT FILLED WITH BEAN PASTE.

THEY'RE BLOATED WITH FILTHY MUD.

THAT'S KOGETSUAN.

YOUR *YOKAN*...

...GOT IT RIGHT.

BUT...

WHILE THE NEW MOON MAY BE HIDDEN,

THAT DOESN'T MEAN IT'S GONE.

IT WAXES AND SHINES ONCE MORE.

I'LL MAKE IT SHINE AGAIN...

...WITH THESE HANDS.

I'LL TAKE OVER THIS PLACE SOON ENOUGH, I SWEAR.

THAT'S WHY...

...YOU SAID YOU WANTED TO MARRY SOMEONE LIKE ME?

BUT SOMEONE HAD TO SUFFER...

...

IT WAS THE PERFECT WAY TO DECLARE WAR, WASN'T IT?

THE LOOKS ON MY RELATIVES' FACES WERE PRICELESS.

WELL...

IT'S NOT LIKE YOU CAME HERE BECAUSE YOU LOVE ME, EITHER.

I'M JUST AS BAD.

I'M ABOUT TO LIVE A LIE...

TO GET ACCESS TO THIS HOUSE-HOLD.

STILL...

AS SOON AS YOU'VE GOTTEN YOUR CURRENT PLACE PACKED UP,

COME MOVE IN HERE RIGHT AWAY.

THERE'S NO NEED FOR THAT.

I HAVE NOTHING.

ALL I HAVE IS WHAT I BROUGHT WITH ME.

NO HOME, NO FAMILY.

...EVEN STILL...

...I'M GOING TO TAKE BACK WHAT WAS TAKEN FROM ME.

STARTING TODAY, I LIVE IN YOUR CARE.

...WE'RE PARTNERS IN CRIME.

THE TRUTH ABOUT OUR RELATIONSHIP IS...

"Sakura."

You're actually...

...Sakura, aren't you?

NO.

The daughter of a murderer.

CHAPTER 5
An Order From a Regular

4ステップ

NO!

A DREAM ...

YESTER-DAY...

...THAT'S RIGHT.

BUT IT'S SO BIG...

I DOUBT THAT MOTHER OF YOURS WILL ALLOW THIS.

THIS ROOM IS YOURS. USE IT AS YOU LIKE.

FORGET THE PROPRI-ETRESS. IT'S MY DECISION TO MAKE.

THE EMPLOYEE QUARTERS WOULD HAVE BEEN FINE.

WHAT AN UNSET-TLING ROOM...

IT WAS SMALL, BUT COZY...

THAT ROOM I LIVED IN WITH MOMMA...

HURRY AND COME.

HEY, IT'S SIX O'CLOCK ALREADY.

...PLUS FIVE APPRENTICES.

...AND TOMIOKA-SAN...

THE CONFEC-TIONERS YAMA-GUCHI-SAN...

Uniforms: Kogetsu

THIS IS THE HEART OF KOGETSUAN.

NAO.

YOU'RE OVER HERE.

I-I'M NAO HANAOKA.

IT'S NICE TO MEET YOU ALL.

THE PEOPLE WHO WORK AT KOGETSUAN!

WHAT A SHAMELESS BITCH.

SHE'S SO ***PLAIN.***

THAT'S HER, RIGHT? THE ONE WHO BARGED IN ON THE WEDDING?

HEY.

I HEARD THAT, YOU KNOW.

DISH-WASHING?

IT'S GRUNT WORK, AFTER ALL.

DOES THAT OFFEND YOU?

THIS WILL BE YOUR JOB.

TOMIOKA-SAN, ABOUT THE CONFECTIONS FOR THE DAY AFTER TOMOR-ROW...

BUT HERE, THAT'S THE BRIDE'S JOB.

DO IT RIGHT.

MY JOB...

...

THE HEAT EVERY TIME THE STOVE TURNS ON...

THE KNOCK OF THE SIEVE AGAINST THE COUNTER...

THE AROMA OF SIMMERING BEANS...

JOJIMA, YOU CAN HANDLE THE SECOND *SHIBUKIRI*, RIGHT?

YES, SIR.

I LOVE THIS PART... WHEN YOU DRAIN AWAY THE ROUGHNESS OF THE BEANS THORUGH A STRAINER.

AAH, THIS IS NICE.

I...

...WANT TO STAY HERE FOREVER...!

YOU'RE FORGET-TING THE "*BIKKURI-MIZU*"!

HOLD IT!

H...

...UH...

ONCE THE *AZUKI* BEANS COME TO A BOIL, YOU NEED TO ADD COLD, "SURPRISE WATER" TO COOL IT DOWN ALL AT ONCE.

THAT HELPS THE BEANS COOK UP NICE AND SOFT.

YOU'VE GOTTA OBSERVE REAAAALLY CLOSELY HOW THE BEAN'S LITTLE FACE CHANGE'S!

IT'LL TELL YOU THE MO-MENT IT'S GOTTEN TASTY.

AGAPE ぽかん

I'M SORRY.

I JUST GOT HERE A MONTH AGO... AND I KEEP FORGETTING EVERYTHING I'M TOLD...

A-ADD COLD WATER, RIGHT.

WHOOPS...

I GOT CARRIED AWAY...

tee hee

O... OR SOME-THING.

ONE MONTH...

O-OKAY.

CARE-FULLY...

CARE-FULLY...

THIS TAKES ME BACK.

A NEWBIE, HUH?

THIS IS FOR SMOOTH BEAN PASTE, RIGHT?

ONCE IT BOILS, SKIM OFF THE FOAM CAREFULLY.

SO IT WON'T TASTE AS GOOD IF YOU SKIM TOO MUCH OFF.

BUT THE STUFF IN THE FOAM IS PART OF THE *AZUKI* FLAVOR,

...JUST LIKE MOMMA...

...MAKING ALL KINDS OF SWEETS...

...OF STANDING HERE...

I ALWAYS USED TO DREAM...

HA GASP

DO WE HAVE ENOUGH WHITE NAVY BEANS?

WE DO!

RIGHT!

GET THE MOUNTAIN YAMS READY, TOO!

EVERY YEAR...

WE'LL ALL HAVE OUR HANDS FULL UNTIL IT'S OVER.

IT SEEMS AWFULLY BUSY.

OF COURSE.

MAYBE ONE OF THE CONFECTIONERS...

...KNEW MOMMA.

AND KOGETSUAN MAKES THE SWEETS THEY OFFER TO THE GODS EVERY YEAR.

THERE'S A FESTIVAL TO PRAY FOR GOOD WEATHER AT MISAKA SHRINE IN TWO DAYS,

TEN YEARS ...

IT'S ODD THAT NO ONE'S BEEN AROUND LONGER, HUH?

GIVEN THE SHOP'S LONG HISTORY...

HEY,

HOW MANY YEARS HAS THE MOST SENIOR PERSON WORKED HERE FOR?

I THINK ...

...TOMIOKA-SAN'S BEEN HERE EXACTLY TEN YEARS NOW.

KOGETSUAN'S REGULARS.

I GUESS THE CUSTOMERS ARE THE ONES WITH THE LONGER RELATIONSHIPS.

ORDER FORMS

...TO SOME-ONE WHO KNEW MOMMA,

IT WILL GIVE ME SOME KIND OF LEAD.

MAYBE IF I TALK...

IF ONLY I COULD MEET THE OWNER.

BUT HOW...?

Shirafujiya

Kimono shop

THIS SHOP...

...HAS ORDERS FROM 53 YEARS AGO...

A KIMONO SHOP.

3-5 Higashiyama

SHIRA-FUJIYA...

WE'LL ALL HAVE OUR HANDS FULL.

THERE'S A FESTIVAL TO PRAY FOR GOOD WEATHER AT MISAKA SHRINE IN TWO DAYS.

Sign: Kogetsuan

TSUBAKI-SAN.

WHAT'S WRONG?

WH-WHO DID THIS?!

WHO TOOK AN ORDER FROM SHIRAFUJIYA FOR TOMORROW?!

THERE'S AN ORDER FROM SHIRAFUJIYA ON THE DAY OF THE FESTIVAL.

BUT EVERYONE KNOWS WE CAN'T TAKE ANY ORDERS FOR TOMOR-ROW.

SO WHO...?

I TOOK THE ORDER.

I HAPPENED TO PICK UP THEIR CALL.

IT WAS ME.

NO ONE'S FREE THAT DAY.

WE COULDN'T POSSIBLY EVEN ***DELIVER*** SWEETS TO SHIRAFUJIYA.

I...I'M SO SORRY.

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

WH...

THEN LET ME DELIVER THEM.

I'M NOT INVOLVED IN THE FESTIVAL AT ALL.

...

NO.

B...

BUT...

TSUBAKI-SAN.

I'LL GO.

SHIRA-FUJIYA IS AN IMPORTANT CUSTOMER.

IT'S UNBECOMING OF KOGETSUAN WORKERS TO GET WORKED UP OVER SOMETHING LIKE THIS.

YOU ALL STAY ON SCHEDULE.

ALL THE MAJOR LANDOWNERS IN THE AREA WILL BE AT THE FESTIVAL.

IF YOU DON'T MAKE AN APPEARANCE, THEY'LL SAY YOU'RE NOT FIT TO BE THE HEIR.

TSUBAKI-SAN!

BUT THIS IS MY CHANCE...!

TRUST ME, TSUBAKI-SAN.

I'LL MAKE THE DELIVERY TO SHIRAFUJIYA PROPERLY, SO...

WAIT!

WHAT IS THERE TO *TRUST?!*

YOU WENT BEHIND MY BACK!

JUST DO AS YOU'RE TOLD, ALL RIGHT?!

...

WISTERIA SYMBOLIZE FAMILY PROSPERITY,

AND THAT'S AT THE CORE OF SHIRAFUJIYA'S FAMILY-RUN BUSINESS.

THE BEAN PASTE SHOULD BE WHITE.

AND THE SHAPE SHOULD ECHO THE KIMONO THEY SELL.

SHIRAFUJIYA HAS ALWAYS ORDERED THE SAME SWEETS...

...SINCE A GENERATION AGO...

JO-NAMAGASHI WITH A WISTERIA* MOTIF.

***Shirafuji** = "white wisteria" in Japanese.

I CAN MAKE THAT.

AN ESTABLISHMENT THAT VALUES TRUST WOULD NEVER CANCEL AN ORDER.

WHAT ABOUT THE SWEETS FOR THE FESTIVAL?

IF I DON'T SLEEP, I CAN MAKE IT.

FINE. YOU GO, THEN.

BUT... *I'LL* MAKE THE CONFEC-TIONS.

SO HE DOES CARE ABOUT THE CUSTOMERS...

"THE IDEAL WAGASHI SHOP."

NOW I CAN GO TO SHIRAFUJIYA.

AND...

Sign: Kogetsuan

WELL, I'M OFF.

...

ﾄｽｽ...

HE DOESN'T NEED TO TELL ME. I'LL DO IT RIGHT.

THE TINIEST BLUNDER, AND I'LL NEVER FORGIVE YOU.

THAT'S WHY I'M GOING.

Sign: Shirafujiya

Banner (R to L): Kimono, Shirafujiya.

I APOLOGIZE FOR THE SUDDEN VISIT.

MY NAME IS NAO.

I'VE COME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF AS THE WIFE-TO-BE OF TSUBAKI-SAN, THE ELDEST SON OF KOGETSUAN.

THE KIMONO'S TIGHT.

IT'S SUFFO-CATING.

131

WHEW

MY, THANK YOU FOR COMING ALL THIS WAY.

I'VE BROUGHT A SMALL GIFT.

I'VE GOT TO DO THIS RIGHT.

I'LL GO GET THE OWNER RIGHT AWAY.

COULD YOU PUT THE SWEETS WE GOT ON A PLATE?

OF COURSE.

CALM DOWN.

...MAYBE AFTER A FEW VISITS...

EVEN IF I CAN'T ASK TODAY...

WHAT'S THE MATTER?

TH...

THE SWEETS ...

KO-
GETSUAN-
SAN.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY BRINGING ***THESE*** AS A GIFT?!

RED...

THE SWEETS...

ARE ALL RED—

HAAH

HAAH

HAAH

HAAH

THE COLOR RED.

HAAH

HAAH

NAO-SAN?!

HAAH

"Kagome,"

"Ka-gome,"

WH...

WHY—

OH, A BUG GOT INSIDE.

"the bird trapped..."

"...inside the cage..."

70年代

IT'S PUNISHMENT.

TSUBAKI-SAN.

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS?

BECAUSE SHE LIED TO ME.

To be continued in Volume 2

Something's Wrong With Us

HI, ANDO HERE.

SINCE THE MAIN CHARACTER IS A CONFECTIONER THIS TIME,

I TRIED MAKING SOME *WAGASHI* MYSELF.

SOME OLD WAGASHI *ESTABLISHMENTS RUN WORKSHOPS...*

...AND LOTS OF PLACES OFFER CLASSES.

SINCE IT WAS EARLY SPRING, WE MADE PLUM BLOSSOM AND CAMELLIA JO-NAMAGASHI.

MY FIRST EXPERIENCE WAS A ONE-DAY CLASS AT A CERTAIN "ALPHABETIC" COOKING STUDIO.

THEY HAD ALL THE TOOLS, TOO—VERY CONVENIENT.

BUT THAT WAS ALREADY PREPPED AND SPLIT INTO PORTIONS.

I WAS WORRIED WE'D START BY MAKING BEAN PASTE...

It's super, super yellow!

Gaaaah!

I MESSED IT UP FROM THE START (CRY).

ALL-YOU ACTUALLY NEED IS A TINY DAB USING A SPOON.

WHOA! THAT'S WAY TOO MUCH!

THE FUN IS LARGELY IN SHAPING THE JO-NAMAGASHI,

HERE'S YELLOW FOR THE FLOWER'S CENTER.

SO WE COLORED THE BEAN PASTE WITH FOOD COLORING.

THE TOOL USAGE WAS ALSO SURPRISING.

WE USED A SIEVE TO MAKE KINTON...

...AND A CHOPSTICK TO MAKE THE DENT IN THE FLOWER'S CENTER. PRETTY INVENTIVE!

IT FELT MORE LIKE PLAYING WITH PLAY DOUGH THAN MAKING FOOD.

THIS WAS REALLY HARD.

NEXT WE ENCASED THE BEAN PASTE.

...BUT I'D STRETCH THE OUTER PASTE TOO THIN AND RIP IT...

...OR IT WOULD BE UNEVEN AND THE RED BEAN PASTE INSIDE WOULD SHOW THROUGH.

YOU USE THE PAD OF YOUR THUMB TO CLOSE THE BALL AS YOU ROTATE IT CLOCKWISE...

I SUCKED AT THIS!

...I GOT THEM DONE!

AND THOUGH THEY WERE A TAD MISSHAPEN...

BUT MY APPETITE GOT THE BETTER OF ME, AND I ENJOYED THEM IN THE END! ♪

I WAS SO TAKEN BY THE FINISHED SWEETS THAT IT FELT A SHAME TO EAT THEM.

TH-THEY'RE SO CUTE...

SOMEONE WHO WOULD OFFEND A CUSTOMER HAS NO PLACE HERE.
"SHOULD WE ACT LIKE A MARRIED COUPLE, FOR ONCE?"
THIS IS JUST A TACTIC. I'M NOT FALLING FOR HIM.
I'M SCARED.
MORE GRIPPING DEVELOP-MENTS AWAIT...
NAO-SAN.
RELATION-SHIPS INTERTWINE. THE PAST IS UNCOVERED.
LET'S JUST WAIT AND SEE.
Volume 2

NEXT VOLUME PREVIEW

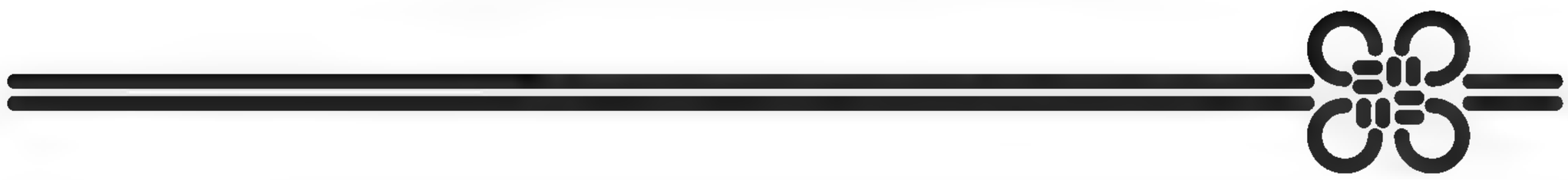
A story of love, fate, and *wagashi*.

Something's Wrong With Us

2

COMING SOON

Natsumi Ando



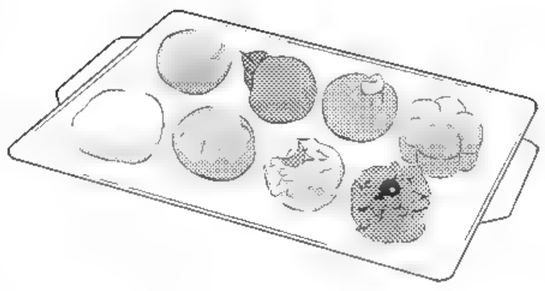
I've had the chance to visit a lot more old *wagashi* establishments recently, though I very rarely used to go in them before. There's a distinct atmosphere in these shops as soon as you walk in.

I feel like my character is under scrutiny, like I should stand up with my back straight.

I imagine that the protagonist Nao feels that way, too.

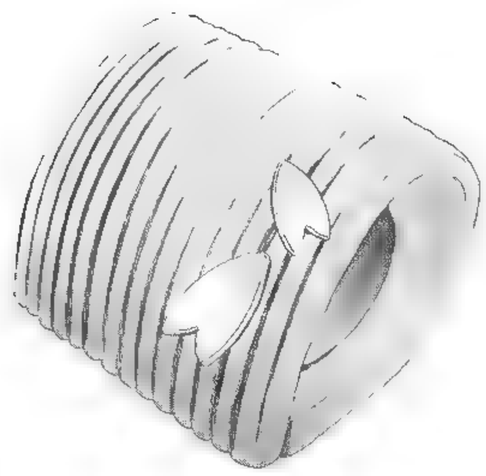
Something's Wrong With Us

Translation Notes



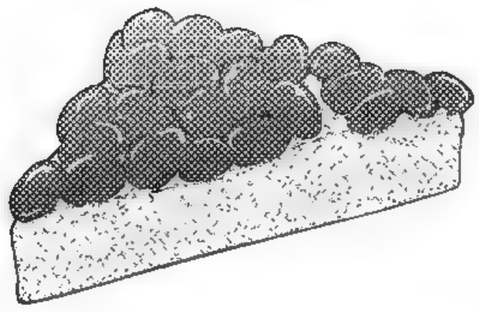
wagashi, page 5
Traditional Japanese confections.

Sayama-ryu, page 22
The formal Japanese Way of Tea is split into various "*ryuha*," or "schools," each practicing their own style of the traditional Japanese tea ceremony.



hanaikada, page 30
A spring *wagashi* motif that represents sakura blossom petals flowing down a river, like tiny rafts.

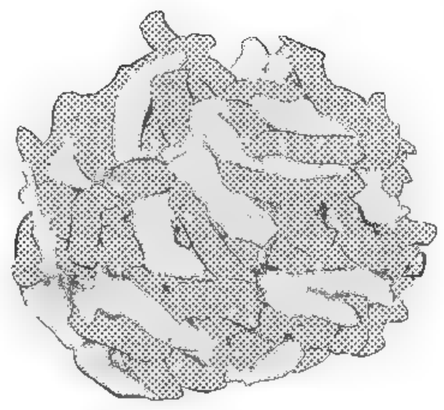
manju, page 33
A bite-sized bun with sweet filling, usually bean paste.



kintsuba, page 33
A block of sweet red bean paste with a thin coating of grilled batter.

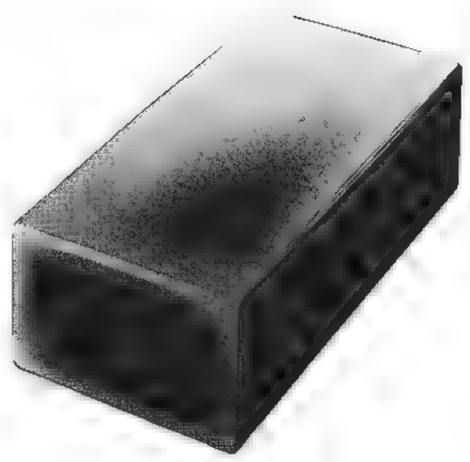
Usuzumi-zakura, page 59
A solitary sakura blossom tree that has stood in Gifu Prefecture for over 1,500 years, known for the unusual color change that its flowers go through. *Usuzumi* means "pale ink."

"I head home under green sakura trees, and season fish with salt."
page 73
A haiku by 20th century poet Ayako Hosomi, about how, now that the petals have fallen and the leaves are out on the sakura blossom trees, life is back to ordinary with the usual salted fish for dinner.



natane, page 85
A yellow and green spring motif of a field of *natane* (rapeseed) plant flowers.

monaka, page 85
Two crispy wafers made of rice flour with a sweet filling (usually bean paste) sandwiched in between.



yokan, page 103
A smooth, jellied sweet made of bean paste and agar. The most common type is made of red bean paste and is a very dark brown—almost black.

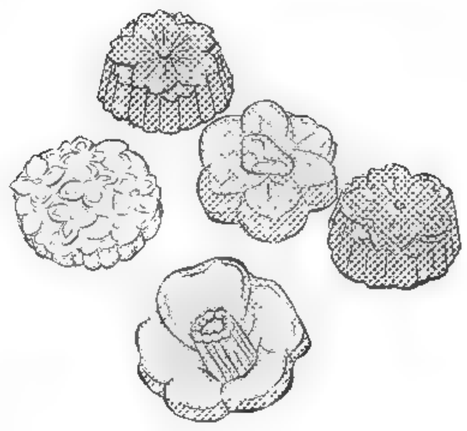
The color black, page 103
Black in a wedding gift is inappropriate because it is thought to represent misfortune. In Japan, auspicious colors for weddings are red and white.

betrothal, page 111

Traditionally, when two people get engaged, the two families hold a formal betrothal ceremony where they exchange gifts, often in the form of money. Although this has become less extravagant in recent years, the gifts would involve thousands of dollars, even for normal households. A marriage between two prestigious households like the ones here would likely involve a small fortune.

Tsubaki-san, page 113

In very formal households like the Takatsuki family, the mother will often address her children with the "-san" honorific. "-san" is akin to "Mr., Ms., Mx." etc. Additionally, the honorific "-sama" is at a higher level of respect, akin to "Master" or "Lord." For example, the father-in-law on page 119 would be referred to with the "-sama" honorific.

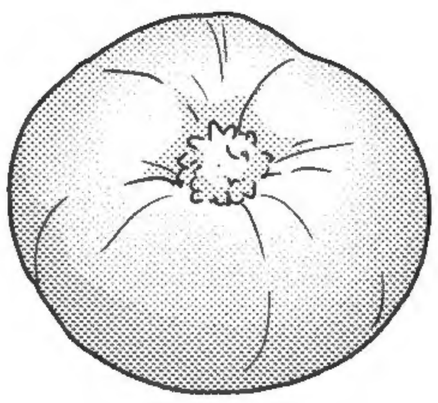


rakugan, page 120

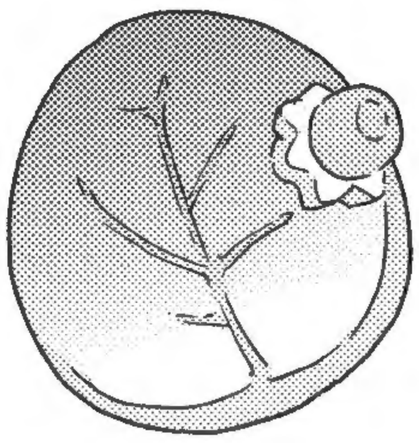
Delicate, pressed sugar candies made with *wasanbon* sugar (a fine-grained sugar with a distinctive taste used for *wagashi*) and starch. They're made using traditional wooden molds and come in all kinds of colors and shapes.

shibukiri, page 144

Literally "cutting the bitterness." The process of pouring away the water once the *azuki* beans come to a boil. This is repeated several times to remove the bitter taste from the beans.

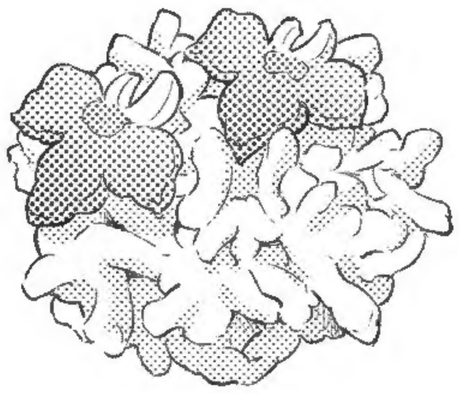


bikkurimizu, page 144
Literally "surprise water." The process of adding cold water to rapidly cool down a boiling pot.



jo-namagashi, page 155
Fresh, artistic *wagashi* that are made with specific (usually seasonal) motifs.

Kagome, kagome, page 164
A nursery rhyme used in a children's game, where a blindfolded child has to guess who stands behind them at the end of the song.



kinton, page 169
A popular type of *jo-namagashi* that involves a ball of bean paste covered in strands of colored bean paste, giving it a "fuzzy" appearance.

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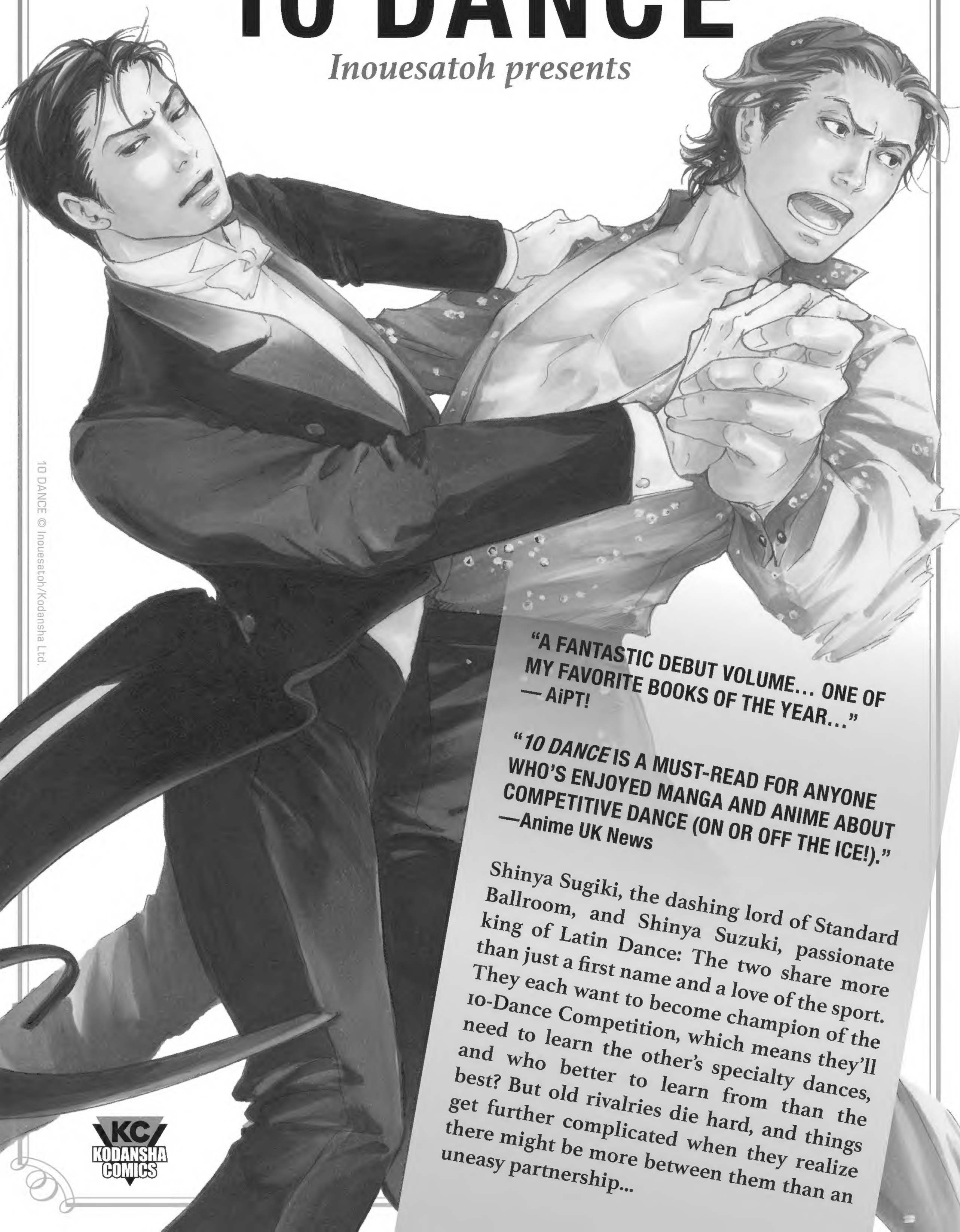

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Something's Wrong With Us 1

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